

Mexican Wolf Reintroduction Annual Report 2

Reporting Period: January 1 - December 31, 1999

Prepared by:

Wendy Brown, Mexican Wolf Field Coordinator
U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service
Region 2

Cooperators:

Arizona Game and Fish Department
New Mexico Department of Game and Fish
USDA Wildlife Services



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Mexican wolves were extirpated from the wild in the United States by 1970. A captive breeding program, managed under a Species Survival Plan (SSP) for the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service (USFWS) by 41 zoos and wildlife sanctuaries in the United States and Mexico, now contains approximately 192 animals. The Secretary of the Interior signed a record of decision in March 1997, which implemented the USFWS's preferred alternative in an environmental impact statement on the reintroduction of wolves to a portion of their historic range in Arizona and New Mexico. In January 1998, the first Mexican wolves were transferred to acclimation pens on the Apache National Forest in preparation for their release into the wild. This report summarizes project information and activities from January 1 - December 31, 1999.

Abbreviations used in this document:

Packs and/or acclimation pen sites:

CB = Campbell Blue
ES = Engineer Springs
GV = Gavilan
HN = Hawks Nest
MP = Mule Pack
PS = Pipestem
TC = Turkey Creek

Wolf age and sex:

M = adult male (> 2 years old)
F = adult female (> 2 years old)
m = subadult male (< 2 > 1 years old)
f = subadult female (< 2 > 1 years old)
mp = male pup (< 1 year old)
fp = female pup (< 1 year old)

Methods

Release candidate wolves were selected by the SSP and acclimated prior to release in Service-approved facilities. These included the Ladder Ranch Captive Management Facility managed by the Turner Endangered Species Fund (Ladder Ranch), the Sevilleta Captive Management Facility managed by the FWS at Sevilleta National Wildlife Refuge (Sevilleta), and the Wolf Haven Captive Management Facility managed by Wolf Haven International (Wolf Haven). Wolves were either bred at one of these facilities, or transferred to them for evaluation and acclimation before being released to the wild. Contact between wolves and humans was minimized and carcasses of road-killed native prey species (mostly deer and elk) supplemented

their routine diet of processed canine food. Genetically and socially compatible breeding pairs were established and evaluated for physical, reproductive, and behavioral suitability for release. Some pairs produced pups in captivity before release, and their pups and occasionally yearlings were included in the release group.

Wolves selected for release were radio collared and moved to smaller pens at release locations. Caretaker camps were established approximately 0.5 miles away from pen sites. Carcasses of native prey and fresh water were provided as needed. When necessary, security was maintained by posted U.S. Forest Service (USFS) closures of an area of approximately 0.5 mi radius around each pen.

We used three 0.33 acre chain link pens in 1999; the Campbell Blue, Engineer Springs, and Turkey Creek pens (Figure 1). However, this technique was not feasible in wilderness or other remote locations. To address this issue, we developed and tested an experimental technique for release pens. We constructed portable, heavy-gauge nylon mesh pens reinforced with lightweight electric wire powered by solar cells for releases at the Coalson, Horse Canyon, and Rousensock release sites (Figure 1). The mesh was supported by steel fence posts protected by PVC tubing. Wolves were transported to remote areas in specially designed panniers carried by mules and held in these “soft mesh” pens 1-65 days before they were intentionally released or escaped.

Wolves were monitored by radio telemetry from the ground and typically twice weekly from the air. Monitoring was most intensive during the initial weeks after release to determine when wolves began hunting. If we found wolves were near roads or other areas of human activity we hazed them by chasing on foot, horseback, or all-terrain vehicles. When necessary, we also used rubber bullets, cracker shells, and slingshots to encourage a flight response to humans.

After release, all wolves were provided with road-killed elk and deer, or occasionally commercially produced “meat logs” for wild carnivores to supplement their diet. The duration of supplemental feeding varied depending on time of year, availability of vulnerable prey, and whether pups were present. Supplemental feeding was gradually discontinued when wolves began killing prey.

Suspected wolf depredation on livestock was investigated by USDA Wildlife Services specialists. Results of all investigations were reported to the Defenders of Wildlife, a non-profit organization that compensates livestock owners for confirmed wolf depredation.

Range maps in this document were generated using Arc View software, based on radio telemetry and occasional confirmed visual sightings of individuals. Polygons generated were based on 90% of all verified locations and a “buffer” of either 3 or 5 miles, depending upon the number of locations used > 20 or ≤ 20 , respectively. This method was based on the definition of occupied wolf range in the Federal rule for the nonessential experimental Mexican wolf population. The maps were intended to describe the range and movements of wolves after release, and in some cases, movements in response to management actions or other significant events, such as the death of a mate. They were not intended as formal analysis of home range size.

Reintroduced Population Status

Four wolves were free ranging on January 1, 1999 (Table 1). Between January 1 and December 31, 1999, 23 wolves were released including eight adults, three yearlings, and ten pups released for the first time, and two adults that were translocated (recaptured and released at a later date). Six pups were born in the wild and five were born in an acclimation pen and released. Five wolves died. One was killed by a predator, one was hit by a vehicle, and three pups died of parvo virus. Seven wolves (three adults, one yearling, and three pups) were recaptured for management purposes. As of December 31, 13 wolves were free ranging, and six (all pups of the year) were fate unknown (Table 1).

Monitoring and Management

Campbell Blue Pair (M166, F482)

The Campbell Blue (CB) pair remained together after their release from the ES pen (Figure 1) on December 18, 1998 until the death of the female on October 27, 1999. This was the second release and second mate for M166. His original mate was shot and killed in 1998, and their pup disappeared soon after her death. M166 and F482 spent only 23 days together prior to release and appeared to establish a firm pair bond. Their range encompassed an area of approximately 153 square miles around their release site (Figure 2).

The pair was provided with supplemental food only once after their release, as M166 had demonstrated ability to sustain himself the previous year. Seven prey site investigations conducted by project personnel February 4 – October 4 yielded four elk and three deer fed on by the CB wolves. Five of these were probable wolf kills, one was scavenged from a hunter's camp, and one was attributed to unknown causes (Table 2).

The CB pair used remote areas not readily accessible to ground monitoring. The pair localized briefly in early May, but we were not able to confirm a den location. No live pups were ever observed from this pair. Later necropsy of F482 revealed six placental scars, indicating she had conceived pups. On October 27, F482 was found dead within her normal home range. Necropsy performed by the National Wildlife Health Laboratory in Madison, Wisconsin revealed that she had been killed by a bite from a large carnivore, consistent with a mountain lion attack. We had previously documented M166 feeding on mountain lion kills, suggesting this may have been the situation in which F482 was killed.

M166 remained within his normal home range. On November 30, we transferred F522 from the Ladder Ranch to the ES pen. M166 began frequenting the pen area and on December 18, he was trapped and placed in the pen to attempt to bond the two wolves.

Gavilan Pack (M183, F168, m555, mp583, mp584, mp585, fp586, mp587)

The Gavilan (GV) family group was placed in the ES pen on January 7 (Figure 1). The group originally included the alpha pair and three male yearlings (m554, m555, m556). The CB pair, released from the ES pen in December, was attracted to the wolves in the pen in late January,

although remote camera observations indicated they were not initially aggressive. However, on February 21, three of the Gavilan wolves were observed with minor injuries, apparently from fighting through the fence with the CB wolves. On February 22, the entire pack was removed from the pen and temporarily transferred back to Ladder Ranch while a new release site was selected and prepared.

A soft mesh pen was constructed in Coalson Canyon (Figure 1), and the alpha female, now pregnant, the alpha male, and one yearling (m555) were transferred to the pen on March 18. Five pups were observed in the pen on April 14. Prevailing drought conditions unfavorably affected livestock and game distribution in the Coalson Canyon area. On May 21 we moved the wolves via helicopter to another mesh pen approximately 5 miles away in Horse Springs Canyon, where conditions appeared better (Figure 1). The wolves chewed out of their new pen on May 24, and remained in the immediate area for approximately 6 weeks. We provided them with supplemental food on 4 occasions during this period.

The adult wolves were first located back in the Coalson Canyon area on July 8. Livestock remained in Coalson Canyon contrary to the allotment plan, and biologists observed little sign of native prey. All eight members of the pack were being observed in the area. The pack was involved in three livestock depredations between August 9 and September 7 (Table 3). After the third incident, we initiated an effort to move the pack away from the conflict area by using disturbance and supplemental food. Wolves were intensively monitored, and intentionally harassed by approaching them closely on horse or mule back. Food was placed ahead of the wolves in the desired direction. We were successful in moving the wolves over nine miles to the Maple Canyon area on the Arizona/New Mexico border by early October (Figure 3). Although livestock was present, elk and deer sign was more abundant in this area. We continued to provide supplemental food on occasion to encourage the wolves to stay.

The pack began to expand their range east to Alma Mesa. We observed the wolves on several occasions, and noted that only four of the five pups appeared to be with the pack. The last confirmed sighting of mp586 was on October 31. Yearling m555 began spending time exploring away from the pack, suggesting he was beginning to disperse. On December 26, the alpha pair and four pups were involved in a fourth depredation of an adult cow. No native prey kills were documented for this pack (Table 2).

Hawks Nest Pack (M131, F486)

The Hawks Nest (HN) M131 was one of two remaining wolves from the original release in March 1998, and the only remaining member of his original pack of six (see Annual Report 1). He was trapped and re-released in 1998 with a new female, F486. Because these two wolves did not stay together, we trapped F486 and M131 on January 16 and January 27, respectively. The wolves were placed in the CB pen and held throughout the breeding season to facilitate bonding.

F486 whelped a litter of 3 pups in the acclimation pen May 13. We held the family group until June 6, and released them when elk began calving in the area. We provided supplemental food to the pack after release, gradually decreasing the frequency and discontinuing feeding completely in October. Three pups, which were not sexed before release, were observed with the adults through

August 22. Two pups were observed through the end of the year.

The HN pack established a range of 345 square miles that encompassed their release pen, and included the area used the previous year by the alpha male and his original mate (Figure 4). Project biologists investigated four prey sites within the HN home range. All were elk, two were probable wolf kills, and two were fed on by the wolves but the cause of death was undetermined (Table 2).

Mule Pack (M190, F189, m578, f579, m580, m581)

The Mule Pack (MP) pair and their four six week-old pups were transferred from Sevilleta Refuge to Alpine, Arizona on May 22. We planned to fly the wolves to the wilderness boundary the same day, where personnel were waiting with mules carrying special panniers designed to transport the wolves. High winds caused the helicopter operation to abort, and the wolves were held overnight before being transported via helicopter and mules to a soft mesh pen in Rousensock Canyon, within the Blue Range Primitive Area (Figure 1). This was the first release for the Mexican wolf program within the Primitive Area, and the first transfer of wolves on mules.

The wolves chewed out of their soft mesh pen within 24 hours. We did not use electrified wire within 18 inches of the ground to prevent possible injury to the young pups, and it is likely that the pups escaped first. However, the wolves localized around the pen site for approximately 5 weeks after release. We provided supplemental food to the wolves on 6 occasions during this period.

On June 27, the alpha pair was observed on the highway, and on June 29, they traveled over 7 miles to a ranch with numerous dogs and interacted with the dogs. No injuries occurred, and project staff harassed the wolves away. The area was also being frequented by PS wolves, which had a den several miles to the south, and project staff heard howling between the two groups of wolves. Shortly thereafter, the entire MP moved several miles south and west. All four pups were observed on July 30.

Trapping efforts were underway for the nearby PS Pack because they had been involved in depredation. On September 5, MP M190 and F189 were unintentionally captured in traps set for the PS wolves and immediately re-released. Both wolves appeared thin, and supplemental feeding was re-initiated.

The wolves continued to use the lower elevation areas south of their release site, expanding their range further after most members of the PS pack were captured. The MP range included an area of approximately 308 square miles around their release site (Figure 5).

The MP wolves received supplemental food through October 2000. No known kills were documented for this pack, although 2 mule deer killed by mountain lions were found that had been fed on by the wolves (Table 2).

Pipestem Pack (M208, F191, f562, f563, fp623, fp624, fp625, mp626, mp627, fp628).

The Pipestem (PS) alpha pair M208, F191, and their yearling offspring f562 and f563 were transferred from Sevilleta to the Turkey Creek (TC) chain link acclimation pen on January 14. The wolves were held through the breeding season and released on March 15. Yearling f563 was struck and killed by a vehicle on March 20.

In early April, the pack began making forays to a remote ranch house approximately 7 miles from the release pen and interacting aggressively with dogs (Table 3). During one incident on April 6, a dog was injured. The wolves were apparently exhibiting territorial behavior, which increased as the alpha female began localizing her activities for denning in mid-April. Project staff spent considerable effort attempting to harass wolves from the area, and the ranchers attempted to keep their dogs safely confined or attended. In addition, there were eight reports of livestock interactions possibly involving the PS wolves April - July. Three livestock incidents were confirmed, two resulted in damage and one in loss (Table 3).

PS female 191 whelped at least six pups in a den she dug about one mile from the release pen. Although we provided supplemental food for the pack, the wolves continued to interact with livestock. After the pack killed a calf on July 11, we decided to recapture them for translocation to an area without livestock before the pups became actively involved in depredation. Because no suitable site was available in Arizona, the wolves had to be held at Sevilleta until a site could be approved in New Mexico.

The adult male and yearling female were captured on July 13 using the TC pen as a trap. No livestock depredation occurred after the male and yearling were removed. Between July 23 and August 24, five pups were captured, but the female remained elusive. The pups had been held in the TC pen as a lure for the female. On August 24, one male pup was found dead. The remaining pups were transferred to Sevilleta, and two more died August 30. Necropsy revealed the pups had died of parvo virus. Fortunately, the remaining two pups survived.

The range of the PS Pack was about 391 square miles and included their release pen (Figure 6). After the pups were removed, the female moved west and began ranging more widely. On September 16, she was observed traveling with a sixth pup. These two wolves remained free ranging until December. The two PS females had been associating with CB M166, now without a mate. Because 166 was a full brother to F191, we decided to intervene and put F191 in captivity with her pack. F191 and fp628 were captured on December 18 and December 20, respectively.

Occupied Wolf Range

Wolves occupied approximately 2000 square miles during this reporting period, based on all known locations plus a 3-mile buffer (Figure 7).

Wolf/Livestock, Wolf/Pet, and Wolf/Human Interactions

Project personnel responded to twenty-two reports of wolf incidents in 1999 (Table 3). Thirteen were confirmed as involving wolves, four were "possibly" wolf-related, three were attributed to other known causes (one lion, two wolf-dog hybrids), and the cause of two others could not be confirmed.

Four confirmed incidents involved wolves interacting with dogs. One of these resulted in damage. A dog was injured and treated successfully by a veterinarian after fighting with members of the PS Pack on April 6.

Nine confirmed incidents involved livestock interactions (one was the same incident investigation that involved dogs). Two confirmed incidents resulted in minor damage to livestock (one yearling bull, one calf), and five confirmed incidents involved loss of livestock (four cows, one calf). Two other incidents of wolves chasing cattle were confirmed without loss or damage (Table 3).

One incident of wolves causing damage to a hunter-killed white-tailed deer was confirmed. On January 6, hunters reported the CB wolves coming into their camp at night and feeding on a white-tailed deer they had killed and hung in their camp. The hunters reported enjoying watching the wolves, and did not attempt to chase them away. Project personnel suggested to the hunters that condoning such behavior was not helpful to the wolves.

Aside from the incident described above, all incidents involving loss or damage were caused by the PS and GV packs. The PS pack was involved in the confirmed injury to a yearling bull and a calf, and the confirmed loss of one calf. Three possible cattle depredations were also attributed to this pack. The GV pack was involved in four confirmed losses of adult cows. The PS pack was trapped and removed from the area. We attempted to end the livestock conflict with the GV Pack by moving the pack through disturbance and supplemental feeding to an area with more native prey.

Both of these packs had been released into areas below the Mogollon Rim (Rim) where livestock was present year round, and deer, rather than elk, were the primary native prey available. The PS Pack had six wild-born pups, and the GV Pack had 5 pups born in an acclimation pen and released when very young. Our experience with both of these packs was markedly different than with wolves placed above the Rim, where livestock grazing was seasonal, and elk were the primary prey. No livestock depredation, or reported incidents, occurred with wolves above the Rim in 1999, even though cattle were present during the pup-rearing period. No livestock depredation was documented above the Rim in 1998, either (see Annual Report 1).

Interagency Coordination

On January 11, the USFWS conducted a one-year review of the reintroduction effort. We committed in the EIS to continuous monitoring and evaluation of the program, and to thorough reviews at three and five years after reintroduction.

Wolf experts and law enforcement specialists from throughout the country participated in the one-year review. Key issues identified for focus in 1999 included the need for increased supplemental feeding to enhance pup survival, increased outreach to the hunting community, increased law enforcement patrols during hunting seasons to reduce illegal shooting of wolves, and identification of more remote release sites further from human communities.

The AGFD hosted an interagency coordination meeting on media relations and outreach issues on January 14 in Springerville, AZ.

D. Parsons participated in a national gray wolf recovery information meeting with the Director of the USFWS on January 26-27.

D. Parsons, W. Brown, and field staff met with staff from USFS Clifton District on February 18, and with USFS staff from the Alpine Ranger District on February 22 to coordinate 1999 wolf releases on the Apache National Forest.

The USFS Alpine Ranger District conducted basic fire safety training for Mexican wolf field staff and volunteers on April 16.

The Interagency Management Advisory Group met on March 30 in Clifton, AZ, on July 13 in Alpine, AZ, and on November 18 in Glenwood, NM.

The Ladder Ranch hosted an Animal Capture and Handling Clinic for Mexican wolf staff on June 1-2.

USFWS and USFS attended a planning meeting conducted by AGFD on how to deal with potential critical incidences involving predators.

D. Parsons, W. Brown, and N. Smith met with Gila National Forest staff on July 15 and July 27 to discuss wolf management and relocation issues.

C. Buchanan and B. Arroyo represented the wolf program at the annual Mexican wolf SSP meeting in Mexico City August 2-4.

The USFWS issued a proposal to Gila National Forest on December 6 to establish four sites to build temporary pens for translocation of Mexican gray wolves.

Outreach

Project updates were posted locally approximately every 2 weeks in the wolf recovery area in various places such as post offices, libraries, and USFS offices. Field updates are also provided on the USFWS Mexican wolf web site. The address is: <http://mexicanwolf.fws.gov>.

A Mexican Wolf Interagency Reporting Hotline, 1-888-459-WOLF (9653), was maintained for citizens to report sightings, harassment, or taking of Mexican wolves, or to report livestock

depredations.

Project personnel contacted campers, hunters, and other recreationists in the wolf-occupied recovery area and delivered information about the Mexican wolf project.

Notices were sent to all hunters who drew permits to hunt big game in the wolf recovery area. These notices advised hunters of the potential for encountering wolves, provided general recommendations for camping and hunting in wolf-occupied areas, and explained the legal provisions of the nonessential, experimental population rule. Additionally, a special mailing providing information about Mexican wolves was sent to approximately 6,000 hunters in Arizona and approximately 15,000 hunters in New Mexico.

In early March, Wild Sentry, a non-profit wolf education organization, provided presentations about wolves to citizens in Alpine, Arizona, Clifton, Pinetop, and Whiteriver, Arizona. Field staff from the Mexican wolf project assisted by answering questions about the Mexican wolf program at the Alpine presentation, which was sponsored by the Alpine Chamber of Commerce, the Alpine Citizens Advisory Committee, and the Arizona Natural History Association.

The USFS hosted meetings between wolf program staff and grazing permittees on the Clifton District, and community leaders from Safford Arizona in Clifton and Safford, respectively, on March 31.

Wolf program staff conducted public information meetings in Clifton and Safford, AZ on March 30 and 31, respectively. About 70 people attended.

Field staff met with individual permittees on the Clifton and Alpine Districts to discuss upcoming releases and wolf activities on April 15, May 13, and May 14.

D. Parsons conducted several seminars and classroom discussions on the Mexican Wolf Recovery Program at Northern Arizona University on April 19-21, reaching 585 people. While there, Parsons also conducted a taped interview for NPR and appeared on local TV.

J. Reed of FWS developed a traveling Mexican wolf exhibit booth, which is now available to staff and educators. The exhibit was used in the following events:

- the 75th anniversary celebration of the Gila Wilderness sponsored by the USFS and several local organizations in Silver City and Glenwood June 4-5. A highlight was a keynote speech by Nina Leopold Bradley, daughter of Aldo Leopold, who talked about the value of wilderness and the excitement the family felt about the return of wolves to the area.
- the New Mexico State Fair September 19-22, Albuquerque, NM.
- National Wildlife Refuge Days, October 6 Albuquerque, NM
- the Festival of the Cranes, Albuquerque, NM., November 21, 22.

AGFD hosted a teacher education workshop at the PS Ranch on July 15-17. Wolf program staff provided lectures and field trips. Guest presentations were provided by PAWS founder Bobbie Holaday and rancher Barbara Marks.

P. Gladhill from the USFS Alpine Ranger District coordinated the USFS information booth with information on the Mexican wolf at the Apache County Fair in St. Johns, Arizona Sept 23-25. Over 900 people visited the exhibit.

W. Brown, and N. Smith attended the Catron County Citizens Committee meetings in Reserve, NM on September 27 and November 8 to discuss wolf management and possible relocation to New Mexico.

Information signs about the wolf program were placed at major roads and trailheads entering the Apache-Sitgreaves National Forest from the Gila National Forest in New Mexico. The USFS assisted in selecting sites and putting up signs.

Project personnel gave presentations on the Mexican wolf program to the following groups during this reporting period:

January 12 - Erlham College students from Pennsylvania studying endangered species issues in the Southwest, Albuquerque, NM.

February 2 - Arizona Cattle Growers, Phoenix, AZ.

February 11 - Texas Tech University (Lokey Lecture), Lubbock, TX.

February 12 - Portal, Arizona Library Lecture.

February 17 - Mesilla Valley Audubon Society, Las Cruces, NM.

February 26 - Third Annual Youth Council on the Environment, Albuquerque, NM.

April 14 - Sandia High School, Albuquerque, NM.

April 16 - Sweeney Elementary School, Santa Fe, NM.

April 19-21 - Northern Arizona University, Flagstaff, AZ.

April 21 - Interagency Wolf Recovery Conference, Chico, MT.

April 22 - Los Lunas Middle School, Los Lunas, NM.

April 27 - Fairacres Elementary School, Las Cruces, NM.

April 28 - USFS Public Affairs Conference, Reserve, NM

April 29 - Marie Hughes Elementary School, Albuquerque, NM.

May 2 - Albuquerque Academy.

May 20 - Hayes Middle School, Albuquerque, NM.

June 8 - USFS Wilderness Rendezvous, Apache National Forest, Arizona. Field trips were led.

June 16 - Tri-State Wildlife Services Annual Meeting, San Angelo, TX.

July 5 and 9 - Cottonwood Gulch Foundation students, field trips and presentations, Alpine, AZ.

July 10 - Society for Range Management, Jicarilla Apache Reservation, NM.

July 13 - Native American Youth Conference, Ladder Ranch, NM.

July 20 and 29 - Camp Tayee, Pinetop, AZ.

July 24-25 - Heritage Alliance, Hannagan Meadows Lodge, Arizona. Field trips and presentations.

July 26 - Beaverhead Guest Ranch, Alpine, AZ.

August 6-7 - Hoyer and Canyon Point Campgrounds, Apache National Forest.

August 15-16 - Hannagan Meadow Lodge, Arizona.

August 28-29 - Spirit of the Wolf Celebration, Tucson, Arizona.

September 11 - Second Annual Sevilleta/La Joya Open House, Sevilleta National Wildlife

Refuge, NM.

August 31 – Gila National Forest Education Conference, Silver City, NM.

September 30 – USFS Glenwood Ranger District, Glenwood, NM.

September 30 – Community Lecture Series, Western New Mexico University, Silver City, NM.

October 6 – Littlefield High School, Littlefield, TX.

October 13, Del Norte High School, Albuquerque, NM.

November 3 – Arizona Science Center, Phoenix, AZ.

November 5 – Linden Elementary School, Linden, AZ.

November 20 – Festival of the Cranes, Socorro, NM.

Project personnel conducted numerous media interviews and hosted several media field visits.

Law Enforcement

USFWS agents conducted systematic law enforcement patrols throughout the public hunting seasons in occupied wolf range in Arizona. State wildlife officers provided valuable support.

No wolves were illegally shot. Cases on four wolves illegally shot in 1998 remain open.

Litigation

After reviewing arguments from both sides and the government's final environmental impact statement and administrative record, Judge Mechan dismissed with prejudice the New Mexico Cattle Growers' Association, et al. V. U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, et al., lawsuit concerning the release of Mexican wolves bred and raised in captivity into National forest lands located in AZ and NM. The court ruled on Oct. 28 that the FWS complied with NEPA, ESA and the APA regarding the final rule for the Mexican Wolf Recovery Program.

Personnel

The following personnel served during this reporting period. David Parsons directed the program until October. Most individuals collected field data or provided other information used in this report. Colleen Buchanan, Dan Groebner, and Paul Morey assisted with data summary.

Staff:

U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service

David Parsons, Mexican Wolf Recovery Leader (retired September 30)

Wendy Brown, Mexican Wolf Field Coordinator (Acting Recovery Leader Oct. – Dec)

Colleen Buchanan, Mexican Wolf Captive Management Biologist

Paul Morey, Wolf Technician (through November)

Paul Frame, Student Intern/Field Technician

Janet Reed, Student Intern/Outreach Specialist

Bruce Palmer, Biologist (detailed to program, November)

Patty Hoban, Biologist (detailed to program, December)

Arizona Game and Fish Department

Dan Groebner, Regional Nongame Specialist and AGFD Wolf Project Leader

Diane Boyd-Heger, AGFD Field Team Leader (until January 15)

Val Asher, AGFD Field Team Leader (after February 3)

Tim Peltier, AGFD Wolf Technician (until July 17)

Stephanie Naftal, AGFD Wolf Technician (after August 2)

Alexis Watts, AGFD Wolf Technician (after November 2)

Todd Schipper, summer intern

New Mexico Department of Game and Fish

NMGFD Wolf Biologist

USDA Wildlife Services

Alan Armistead, Wolf Management Specialist

Volunteers

Kendall Brown

Peter Brown

Jason Brewer

Christina Chavez

Sandra Hurlbut

Stephanie Naftal

Richard Phillips

Nahum Sanchez (Defenders of Wildlife)

Alexis Watts

Lisa Wilson

Table 1. Status and fates of reintroduced Mexican wolves January 1 – December 31, 1999. Table includes only those wolves reintroduced or believed to be alive in the wild during this period – refer also to Annual Report 1).

* Indicates uncollared animal

<i>WOLF ID</i>	<i>PACK</i>	<i>1999 RELEASE DATE (s)</i> <i>(FIRST RELEASE DATE)</i>	<i>STATUS/FATE</i>
M166	CB	12/11/98 (3/29/98)	recaptured (placed in ES acclimation pen with new mate, awaiting re-release) 12/18/99
F482	CB	12/11/98	dead (predator) 10/26/99
F168	GV	5/22/99	free ranging
M183	GV	5/22/99	free ranging
m555	GV	5/22/99	free ranging
mp582 *	GV	5/22/99	free ranging
mp583 *	GV	5/22/99	free ranging
mp584 *	GV	5/22/99	free ranging
fp585 *	GV	5/22/99	free ranging
mp586 *	GV	5/22/99	fate unknown (last observed 10/31/99)
M131	HN	6/3/99 (3/29/98)	free ranging
F486	HN	6/3/99	free ranging
not assigned *	HN	6/3/99	fate unknown - (2 pups observed through 12/31/99)
not assigned *	HN	6/3/99	fate unknown (2 pups observed through 12/31/99)
not assigned *	HN	6/3/99	fate unknown (last observation of 3 pups on 8/22/99)
F189	MP	5/24/99	free ranging
M190	MP	5/24/99	free ranging
mp578 *	MP	5/24/99	free ranging
fp579 *	MP	5/24/99	fate unknown (last observed 7/30/99)
mp580 *	MP	5/24/99	free ranging
mp581 *	MP	5/24/99	fate unknown (last observed 7/30/99)

<i>WOLF ID</i>	<i>PACK</i>	<i>1999 RELEASE DATE (s)</i>	<i>STATUS/FATE</i>
<i>(FIRST RELEASE DATE)</i>			
F191	PS	3/15/99	recaptured (livestock depredation) 12/18/99
M208	PS	3/15/99	recaptured (livestock depredation) 7/14/99
f562	PS	3/15/99	recaptured (livestock depredation)7/14/99
f563	PS	3/15/99	dead (vehicle) 3/20/99
mp623 *	PS	wild born	dead (parvo virus) 8/24/99
fp624 *	PS	wild born	recaptured (livestock depredation) 8/25/99
fp625 *	PS	wild born	dead (parvo virus) 8/30/99
mp626 *	PS	wild born	dead (parvo virus) 8/30/99
mp627 *	PS	wild born	recaptured (livestock depredation) 8/24/99
fp628 *	PS	wild born	recaptured (livestock depredation) 12/20/99

Table 2. Mexican wolf prey site investigations January 1 – December 31, 1999.

PACK	DATE	*STATUS	COMMENTS	SPECIES	SEX	AGE
Unknown	1/4/99	P		white-tailed deer	unknown	fawn
CB	2/4/99	P		deer	unknown	unknown
CB	2/19/99	P		elk	unknown	unknown
HN	2/27/99	P		elk	unknown	calf
CB	3/3/99	F	hunter kill	white-tailed deer	male	unknown
CB	4/28/99	P		elk	female	adult
CB	5/5/99	P		mule deer	unknown	unknown
CB	6/13/99	P		elk	female	4 years
PS	6/20/99	F	bear kill	cow	unknown	10 months
MP	7/12/99	F	lion	mule deer	female	unknown
MP	7/12/99	F	lion	mule deer	female	4 years
HN	9/17/99	F	unknown causes	elk	female	unknown
CB	10/4/99	F	unknown causes	elk	unknown	unknown
HN	10/19/99	P		elk	female	10 plus
HN	10/31/99	P		elk	female	calf
HN	11/20/99	F	unknown causes	elk	female	calf

* Status: C = Confirmed wolf kill

P = Possible wolf kill

F = Fed on by wolves – cause of death unknown or other

Table 3. Reported Mexican wolf incident investigations in 1999.

<i>DATE</i>	<i>REPORTED INCIDENT</i>	<i>DAMAGE/ LOSS</i>	<i>VERDICT</i>	<i>WOLVES INVOLVED</i>
1/6/99	wolves in camp	hunter's deer	confirmed wolf	166, 482
4/1/99	wolves at ranch and fighting with dogs	none	confirmed wolf	208, 191, 562
4/4/99	wolf fighting with dog	none	confirmed hybrid	none
4/6/99	dead calf	calf	possible wolf	208, 191, 562
4/6/99	wolves fighting with dogs	injured dog	confirmed wolf	208, 191, 562
5/14/99	wolves at ranch, harassing dogs, bull ran through fence	injured yearling bull	confirmed wolf	208, 562
6/2/99	dead dachshund	dachshund	confirmed hybrid	none
6/15/99	dead cow and calf	cow, calf	possible wolf	208, 191, 562
6/20/99	wolves chasing cows	none	confirmed wolf	208, 191, 562
6/22/99	injured calf (limping)	injured calf	confirmed wolf	208, 191, 562
6/26/99	dead calf	calf	possible wolf	208, 191, 562
6/29/99	wolves and dogs interacting	none	confirmed wolf	190, 189
6/30/99	wolves biting at calf	none	confirmed wolf	208, 191, 562
7/11/99	dead calf	calf	confirmed wolf	208, 191, 562
8/9/99	dead cow	cow	confirmed wolf	183, 168, 555
8/13/99	dead calf	calf	confirmed lion	none
8/15/99	dead calf	calf	unconfirmed	none
8/29/99	dead cow	cow	confirmed wolf	183, 168, 555
9/7/99	7 wolves attacking cow	cow	confirmed wolf	183, 168, 582, 583, 584, 585, 586
10/22/99	wolves chasing cattle	none	possible wolf	189, 190, 578, 580
12/12/99	injured calf	injured calf	unconfirmed	none
12/26/99	dead cow	cow	confirmed wolf	183, 168, 582, 583, 583, 584, 585, 586